

## Effect of Nationalism on Religiosity in 30 European Countries

Voicu, Malina

Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

**Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:**

GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

*Dieser Beitrag ist mit Zustimmung des Rechteinhabers aufgrund einer (DFG geförderten) Allianz- bzw. Nationallizenz frei zugänglich. / This publication is with permission of the rights owner freely accessible due to an Alliance licence and a national licence (funded by the DFG, German Research Foundation) respectively.*

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Voicu, M. (2012). Effect of Nationalism on Religiosity in 30 European Countries. *European Sociological Review*, 28(3), 333-343. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcq067>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Deposit-Lizenz (Keine Weiterverbreitung - keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

**gesis**  
Leibniz-Institut  
für Sozialwissenschaften

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under Deposit Licence (No Redistribution - no modifications). We grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, individual and limited right to using this document. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

Mitglied der  
**Leibniz**  
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

# Effect of Nationalism on Religiosity in 30 European Countries

Malina Voicu

Department of Sociology, University of Bucharest, 9, Schitu Magureanu, Sector 5, Bucharest, Romania.  
Email: malina@iccv.ro

**Abstract:** The relations between nationalism and religiosity are complex. Although many previous studies consider religion as a precursor of nationalism, Mitchell (2006) shows that in some contexts the relationship is a reciprocal one. The present approach focuses on the connection between nationalism and Christian religiosity in European countries. People who experience rapid social changes are more likely to reinforce their national identity by searching for stability and a new definition of self and of their own identity. Religion can provide content to the reinforced national identity, especially in the context of religious monopoly resulting in the formation of larger groups that have higher potential for political mobilization and are more likely to control more resources especially when they are supported by the state. The article uses survey data provided by European Values Survey (2000 wave) for the Christian population of 30 European societies. Multilevel regression analysis was used for the analysis. The results indicate a positive effect of nationalist ideology on religiosity in countries with higher level of religious concentration, but no special impact of nationalist ideology on religion was found in post-communist countries.

## Introduction

An external observer can easily notice the overlap between nationalism and religion in conflicts that have occurred in European countries in the last decades. In former Yugoslavia, Catholic Croats fought against Orthodox Serbs and both fought against the Muslim Bosnians. In Northern Ireland, Catholic Irish are in conflict with Protestants. Fox (2004) goes beyond European borders and emphasizes the increased occurrence of religion in ethnic conflicts in the last decades of the twentieth century. The relationship between religion and nationalism are more complex and difficult to reduce to a simple determinism. Many answers give priority to nationalism, considering religion as one factor that generates and reinforces the national identity (Smith, 1991, 1992; Merdjanova, 2000; Krunovich, 2006; Kurth, 2007; Safran, 2008). Mitchell (2006) shows that in many contexts the relationship is a reciprocal one where 'each can stimulate the other' (p. 1137). On the other hand, previous studies aiming at explaining the variation in religiosity (Pollack, 2001, 2008; Pettersson, 2006) have underlined the contribution of nationalist ideology. However, these studies did not investigate it using empirical data.

The present approach focuses on the connection between nationalism and religiosity assuming that in some contexts nationalism can strengthen religiosity. This article investigates the influence of nationalist ideology on religious values in the specific context of higher religious concentration and post-communist transition. Although most of the previous studies have approached the relationship using qualitative analysis or through case studies dedicated to one specific country, the current investigation employs the cross-sectional survey data provided by the European Values Survey 2000 to test the relation.

In the context of rapid socio-economical transformation or perceived structural inequality, people may feel a high 'ontological insecurity' and in trying to cope with the situation join local identity-based groups that provide a sense of security (Kinnvall, 2004). In this context, religion is a source of identity (Hoppenbrouwers, 2002; Krunovich, 2006; Mitchell, 2006). Therefore, religion provides con-

tent to the reinforced national identity and consequently, the search for identity can be converted into a revival of religious beliefs and behaviours.

As long as post-communist countries continue to experience a period of significant social, political, and economical transformation, the impact of nationalism on religiosity will remain strong in ex-socialist states. Religious concentration can moderate the relation between national identity and religiosity. This study tests the effect of nationalist ideology, in the context of higher religious concentration and of post-communist transition on religious beliefs, using multi-level regression analysis. The study focuses on the Christian population from the investigated countries, approaching only the elements of traditional Christian religiosity.

The first section of the article is an overview of the relation between religiosity and nationalism, explaining the effect of nationalism on religious beliefs. The second part introduces the indicators and the strategy used for analysis, whereas the third section is the data analysis. The final section is dedicated to conclusions and to a short discussion.

## **Nationalism as Predictor for Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The current approach looks to nationalism as ‘a way of constructing collective identities that arose alongside transformations in state power, increased long-distance economic ties, new communications and transportation capacities and new political projects’ (Calhoun, 1997: 29). According to Calhoun, nationalism has three dimensions: the discourse, the projects, and the evaluation. The first dimension refers to the production of cultural understanding that leads to the use of the idea of nation as a framework for understanding the world. The second aspect is related to social movements and state policies aimed at promoting the interest of the collectivity known as a nation. The last characteristic refers to the political and cultural ideologies that establish the superiority of the nation. The current approach focuses on the last dimension, assessing the effect of the nationalist ideology on religiosity.

According to Juergensmeyer (1993) a new form of nationalism has flourished in different societies around the world. Religious nationalism has grown in postcolonial societies and in post-communist states (Fox, 2008), and has been reported in the United States (Straughn and Feld, 2010). Globalization challenges the idea of nation state and generates a higher demand for redefining local and national identity everywhere.

In different contexts in different regions around the world, an increasing alliance between religion and nationalism is seen. For example, in the Soviet Union, political breakdown has led to an increase in religious nationalism, a situation that is observed in other post-communist states (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Fox, 2008), even as the 9/11 events and the war in Iraq have accentuated the connection between religion and national identity in the United States (Straughn and Feld, 2010). Common in all the mentioned cases is the threat to national identity, and demonstrate the need to redefine what national identity is; that is, by creating a new border (Volkan, 1999) defined on the basis of religion.

Religion is vital in building a nation’s identity. Barth (1969) stresses the role of frontiers in defining ethnic identity. The frontiers among different ethnic groups can vary from one moment to the next, depending on the situation and on the interaction among groups. Religion itself can be a boundary at a certain moment of time (Mitchell, 2006) and could lose its significance later. For instance, during the war in Croatia, religious practices and beliefs increased, and decreased after the end of the con-

flict (Sekulic, Massey and Hodson, 2006). Religion was relevant as an identity marker during the war, but not during peace. Barth's theory on ethnic borders can be extended to other types of identities, including national identity (Mihailescu, 2007).

Religion is an identity marker that people can use as border between 'we' and 'the others' (Hoppenbrouwers, 2002; Rieffer, 2003; Krunovich, 2006; Mitchell, 2006). In addition, religion provides an integrative ideology that helps in establishing moral standards, explaining the world and the existence of self and of 'others' (Hoppenbrouwers, 2002; Kinnvall, 2004; Mitchell, 2006). Moreover, religion is an effective facilitator for community life and for group mobilization (Mitchell, 2006; Krunovich, 2006). Religious rituals, such as church attendance or pilgrimages, provide the opportunity for group meetings and common actions. Religious beliefs and myths provide content for the nationalist ideology promoting religion, or such beliefs and myths adapt depending on the needs of the group. In some cases, nationalist leaders borrow religious text interpreting them according to their nationalist ideology, whereas in other cases, religious myths are interpreted on the basis of the nationalist ideology, such as the idea of a chosen nation and the sacralization of a national group (Smith, 2000). A sense of national pride and identity make religious practices and beliefs more attractive (Sekulic, Massey and Hodson, 2006). Based on these findings, there seems to be a significant effect of nationalist sentiment on the level of religious values in European countries.

As I have pointed out before, national sentiments and national identity become relevant for religion in some specific social context. During rapid social transformations, individuals experience an increased sense of ontological insecurity (Kinnvall, 2004), and in this search for one stable identity join local identity based groups. The identification with a large group, such as a nation, provides a stronger sense of security, as long as larger social units have higher bargaining power within society. However, not all Europeans have experienced situations that have been challenging their sense of security and have been employing a redefinition of ethnic or national identity, during the last decades. There are some particular contexts that have necessitated a redesignation of identity and which made the national sentiments more relevant for the explanation of religious beliefs.

The first relevant distinction for this topic is between countries from Western Europe and from Central and Eastern Europe. The development of nationalism and national identity has followed a different path in the two parts of Europe. For Central and Eastern Europe, religion has been a very important factor in the construction and preservation of national identity of many countries. This was the case for countries such as Poland or Lithuania (Bruce, 1999, 2001; Froese, 2004) and for most of the Orthodox countries from Eastern Europe (Frankly Lytle, 1998; Merdjanova, 2000; Leujtean, 2007).

In post-communist countries, the breakdown of the communist regime has increased the salience of national identity for religious values and behaviours. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia determined an acute need for redefining national identity, stimulating a new wave of nationalist movements (Calhoun, 1997). The development of religious nationalism in these countries has been documented (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Fox, 2008). New independent states have emerged and they need a new national identity. Communist regimes promoted a secular transnational ideology that was imposed by an external conqueror, the former USSR (Juergensmeyer, 1993). People in the region have developed a strong religious nationalist ideology as a reaction to the communist past, whereas post-communist states try to protect local culture from the external influences (Fox, 2008). Moreover, the economic difficulties experienced during the post-

communist transition, have increased the sense of insecurity and fuelled the search for a stable identity (Kinnvall, 2004). Consequently, one may expect to find that national sentiments in post-communist countries have a stronger impact on their religious values and practices as compared to that in old democratic states from Western Europe.

A second factor that moderates the impact of nationalist ideology on religious phenomenon is religious pluralism. According to supply-side theory (economic market model), religious pluralism increases religious participation (Finke and Stark, 1988; Finke, 1990; Iannaccone, 1991; Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; Pettersson, 2006). A pluralist and a free market of religious goods stimulate religious institutions to expand their offers. Thus, each person can find something that corresponds to his or her spiritual motivations. Whereas the American context is a pluralist one, in many European countries the main religious denomination monopolizes the religious market (Finke and Stark, 1988; Iannaccone, 1991; Hamber and Petterson, 1994; Stark and Iannaccone, 1994). Halman and Draulans (2004) show that in Europe, 'religious pluralism correlates with a lower degree of religiosity and participation in religious services' (p. 313), whereas Chaves and Gorski (2001) point out that the significance of pluralism for religious participation depends on the type of religious competition. According to Chaves and Gorski (2001), religious pluralism is important if the religious participation is a voluntary one; religious organizations being rather voluntary associations compete with other types of associations for acquiring the time and resources of an individual, like in American case. If the religious membership is more like modern citizenship, such as in the European context, religion becomes intertwined with political, social, and cultural conflict (Chaves and Gorski, 2001: 278). In such settings, religious competition overlaps with the struggle for political and economic power; where larger groups are more likely to control more resources and gain more members.

Starting from the theory of group threat, Krunovich (2006) finds a negative impact of religious diversity on the salience of Christian religion for national identity. However, according to Blalock (1967), larger groups have higher potential for political mobilization, resulting in being perceived as a threat by the dominant group. Small religious groups may be less of a threat for the religious majority because they do not represent a real challenge in the competition for resources. Based on the same argument, one can assume that religious pluralism generates relatively small religious minorities that do not pose any threat for each other and for national identity.

The inseparable fusion of religion and nationalism tends to occur in a territory that has a homogeneous religious population, because possessing a particular territory or being connected to it are two very important factors for the nationalist claims (Rieffer, 2003). The religious concentration in an area will reinforce the impact of nationalism on religiosity. This is the case in some European countries with very high religious concentration in which nationalist ideology has fuelled religion in countries such as Poland, Ireland, Romania, Croatia, Slovakia, or Lithuania (Bruce, 1996; Martin, 2005). These countries represent religious monopoly, more than 80 per cent belonging to the main religious denomination, and state strongly supports the main denomination. The Government Favoritism of Religion Index in these countries varies from 5.8 in Poland to 7.8 (Religion and State Project1). The high values indicate that states protect religious denomination which is related to national identity. Consequently it is likely to find a positive effect of nationalist ideology on religious participation in countries with a higher level of religious concentration.

Research has shown that both micro and macro level factors influence religious participation. These include: age, older people being more religious than younger ones (Hout and Greeley, 1987; Gautier,

1997; Argue et al, 1999; Becker and Hofmeister, 2001) or sex, women displaying higher level of religious participation (Nelsen, 1981). On the other hand, cohorts socialized in a secular environment are more likely to be less religious (Hout and Greeley, 1987; Halman and Draulans, 2004). In addition, the positioning on the labor market (De Vaus and MacAllister, 1987), education (Johnson, 1997; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay, 2007), and personal income (Iannaccone, 1990; Iannaccone and Everton, 2004) seem to affect religious involvement. Less religious are employees, as are the more educated people and people with higher income. Religious participation varies depending on the religious denomination. Catholic affiliated persons are more religious oriented (Halman and Draulans, 2004). In terms of values orientation, post-materialism is associated with a lower level of traditional religiosity (Inglehart and Norris, 2004).

Research has emphasized the effect of some macro level variables on religious involvement. According to the secularization theory, the more socio-economically developed a country is, the lower the level of religiosity as proved by empirical studies (Pollack, 2003, 2008; Halman and Draulans, 2004; Inglehart and Norris, 2004; Pettersson, 2006; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay, 2007). The supply-side theory is a more controversial one; some empirical studies support it (Pettersson, 2006), whereas others invalidate it (Halman and Draulans, 2004; Pollack, 2008). The religious tradition of countries appears to be relevant, people living in Catholic countries being more religious than the Orthodox, which are in turn more religious than Protestants (Halman and Draulans, 2004; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay, 2007). Moreover, state support for religion and the level of democratization are relevant predictors of the general level of religiosity and religious practice in a society (Fox, 2008).

Controlling for factors that prove to influence the individual's level of religious beliefs, the following hypotheses are tested using empirical data:

(H1) The national ideology exerts a significant positive effect on religious values.

(H2) The effect of national ideology on religious values is stronger in post-communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

(H3) The effect of national ideology on religious beliefs is greater in countries with lower level of religious pluralism.

## **Data, Measurement, and Methods**

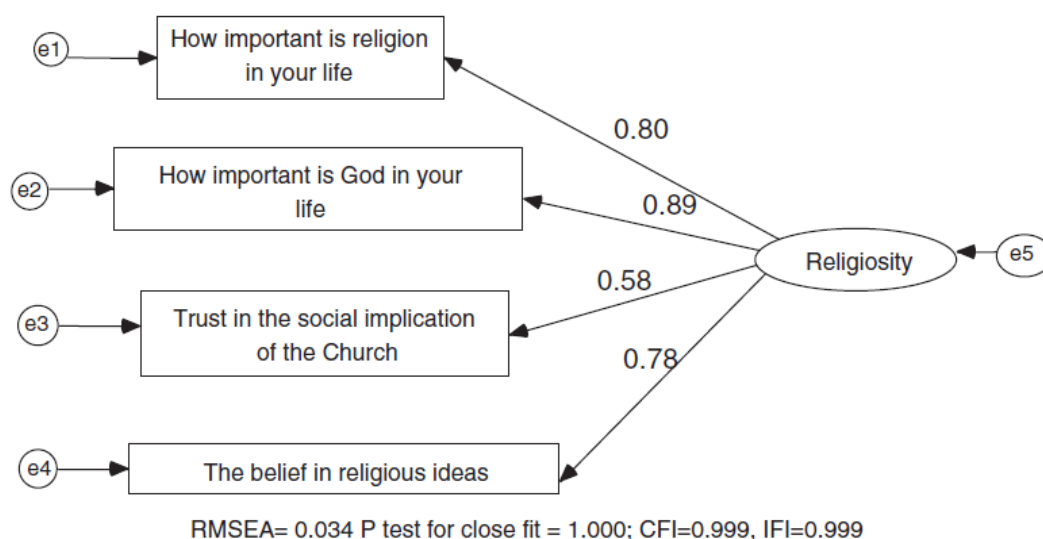
The analysis is based on data from the third wave of European Values Survey (EVS), carried out in 1999/ 2000 in countries from all the European regions. The questionnaire provides information on attitudes and values orientations on a wide range of life domains, including nationalist ideology and religion. Other information regarding social background variables are also available. The following countries are included in the present analysis (with the number of cases for each country): Austria (1485), Belgium (1912), Belarus (1000), Bulgaria (1000), Croatia (1008), Czech Republic (1908), Denmark (1018), Estonia (1005), Finland (1038), France (1615), Germany (2036), Great Britain (1000), Greece (1142), Hungary (1000), Iceland (967), Ireland (1012), Italy (2000), Latvia (1012), Lithuania (1018), Luxembourg (1017), Netherlands (1004), Poland (1095), Portugal (1000), Romania (1139), Russia (2000), Slovakia (1331), Slovenia (1006), Spain (1200), Sweden (1015), and Ukraine (1195). All the national samples are probability samples.<sup>2</sup> The data were made available by ASEP/JDS and ZA, Cologne, Germany.<sup>3</sup> The macro-level indicators used in the analyses come from the CIA World-factbook 2004 and the United Nation Statistics Division.

Several multilevel regression models were generated using the HLM 6.04 program for Hierarchical Linear Modeling. The multi-level regression tests the combined effect of both individual independent variable and country level variables, controlling for the interactions between the individual and country characteristics. In addition, multi-level regression can account for the level of variance that can be attributed to individual characteristics and how much can be attributed to the contextual/group level features. The first model run is a model without explanatory variables and indicates the amount of variance allotted to the individual traits and the variance existing at the group level. The second regression includes only the individual level predictors, but excludes the variable measuring nationalist ideology. The third model comprises only individual level independent variables, including the indicator for nationalist ideological orientation, aiming at assessing the effect of nationalist ideology on the outcome variable. The fourth model contains both individual and country independent variables. The last model adds the effect of the two interactions between individual and country level independent variables. In all models, list wise deletion of missing values has been employed. As the country samples have different sizes, a weight variable has been used in all individual-level analyses so that all samples have the same size (N=1000). The multi-collinearity among the independent variables, both individual and contextual ones, was tested using Tolerance (estimated in SPSS 15), for all the indicators the level of Tolerance above 0.6.

## Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is religiosity that taps the latent dimension of religious belief. The measurement's invariance of the latent dimension, across all countries included in the analysis, was tested using Multi Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis in AMOS 16. The indexes of fit for each country are presented in the Appendix Table A1.

The index of religiosity is constructed as a factorial score and it explains the variation of variables connected to the importance of religion in personal life, to the importance of God in personal life, to the trust in the intervention of the Church in social matters, and to the belief in certain religious ideas. The importance of religion in personal life is asked as How important is religion in your life. The given answers are recorded on a scale of four levels. The importance of God is asked in the item How important is God in your life. The answers are given on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means unimportant and 10 very important. The trust in the social implication of the Church represents a summative score built from the affirmative answers to the following questions: In general, do you believe the Church to offer the right answers to the individuals' moral problems and needs/Problems of family life/Spiritual needs of people/ Social problems of the country. The score ranges from 0 to 4, where 4 indicates maximal acceptance of the social implication of the church. The belief in religious ideas is also constructed as a summative score out of affirmative answers to the following questions: Do you believe that there is a God or not/Life after death/Hell/Heaven/Sin. The values of the score rank from 0 to 5, 5 showing maximal acceptance of traditional religious beliefs. In essence, it is religiosity that influences the way in which an individual answers these questions. For instance, a high score of the religiosity variable indicates a high level of religiousness, whereas a low value indicates orientation toward secularization. The index presented in Figure 1 shows that the model fits the data. It must be mentioned that the indicator has been rescaled and it takes values from 0 to 100 where 0 stands for the absence of religious belief and 100 is a maximal religious value orientation.



**Figure 1** The factorial structure of religiosity (factorial confirmatory analysis)

## Independent Variables: Individual Level

Adherence to nationalist ideology is framed in the question: 'How proud are you to be [country] citizen?' The answers were recoded so that the higher the score is, the higher the adherence to the nationalist ideology. The four answers categories are: not at all proud, not very proud, quite proud, and very proud. For measuring the post-materialist values orientation, the classical scale of materialism was computed (Inglehart 1997) and a dummy variable was built, taking the value of 1 if the respondent was classified as post-materialist.

Other control variables used in the model are: age, education, income, employment, gender, religious socialization during childhood, and religious affiliation. Age is measured in years, whereas education is estimated by the age to complete full-time education. For income, the data set provide the income deciles at the individual level, representing a relative measure as compared to the respective society. Gender is tapped by a dummy variable, which take the value of 1 for female respondents. Employment status is tapped by a dummy variable, indicating if the respondent is active in the labour market (either working as employed or self-employed). Religious socialization during childhood indicates if the respondent was attending church at least once a month when she or he was 12-years old. Religious affiliation indicates the respondent's belonging to Catholic or Protestant denomination (dummy variable), Orthodox denomination being the reference category.

## Independent Variables: Country Level

The level of socio-economic development is tapped by Human Development Index (HDI 2001) computed by United Nations. Percent of Catholic in the country captures the effect of country's religious tradition, whereas a dummy variable indicates the country's affiliation to post-communist group.



Religious concentration was tapped by Herfindahl- Hirschman Index, which represents a widely used measure in the sociology of religion, investigating the degree of monopoly on the religious market

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics for independent variables

	Mean (SD)
Country level variables	
Religious concentration	0.6 (0.2)
Per cent of Catholics in population	53.2 (42.9)
Human Development Index	0.9 (0.1)
Individual level variables	
Nationalism	3.2 (0.8)
Age	45.3 (17.2)
Education	18.8 (5.2)
Income	4.8 (2.6)
Religious socialization in childhood	0.5 (0.5)
Employment	0.5 (0.5)
Female	0.5 (0.5)
Post-materialism	0.1 (0.3)
Belong to Protestant denomination	0.1 (0.3)
Belong to Catholic denomination	0.4 (0.5)

tween religious concentration and state support for religion, the current analysis does not control for the effect of state support for religion on dependent variable.<sup>4</sup> Descriptive statistics for individual

**Table 2** Mean and SD for religiosity and contextual variables by country

	Mean (SD)	Post-communist countries	Per centage of Catholics in population
Malta	86 (16)	No	99
Romania	78 (21)	Yes	8
Poland	76 (22)	Yes	99
Ireland	70 (23)	No	96
Italy	67 (26)	No	99
Portugal	67 (23)	No	97
Croatia	66 (25)	Yes	98
Greece	62 (27)	No	2
Slovakia	59 (33)	Yes	83
Lithuania	58 (29)	Yes	93
Austria	55 (27)	No	92
Ukraine	55 (29)	Yes	2
Iceland	54 (25)	No	0
Belarus	50 (27)	Yes	0
Finland	49 (28)	No	0
Spain	49 (28)	No	98
Latvia	46 (27)	Yes	33
Russia	46 (30)	Yes	0
Belgium	45 (31)	No	86
Luxembourg	44 (28)	No	94
Bulgaria	43 (29)	Yes	13
Hungary	43 (31)	Yes	68
UK	43 (29)	No	16
Slovenia	42 (30)	Yes	95
Netherlands	41 (30)	No	49
France	37 (29)	No	92
Germany	34 (31)	No	46
Sweden	34 (26)	No	2
Denmark	32 (25)	No	1
Estonia	32 (26)	Yes	2
Czech Republic	30 (30)	Yes	85
Sample	51 (31)	–	43

$10 * \sum s_i^2 / s_i^2$  representing the percentage of a religious group out of the total population. When the market is a monopoly situation, the index takes a value close to 1000, whereas when the market is shared by numerous denominations, the value decreases. Small values of the index show the existence of a pluralism situation, whereas high values indicate the existence of monopoly. In the current analysis, the index was divided by 100 to facilitate the interpretation of the results. Data about religious denominations in each country are provided by CIA Worldfact book 2004. Because of the multi-collinearity between religious concentration and state support for religion, the current analysis does not control for the effect of state support for religion on dependent variable.<sup>4</sup> Descriptive statistics for individual and country level variables are shown in Table 1.

## Results

The data indicates a higher variation in the level of religiosity across Europe (Table 2). The results confirm the findings of previous researches (Halman and Draulans, 2004; Froese, 2005; Halman and Pettersson, 2006; Pollack, 2008), indicating an advancement in secularization in Nordic countries (Sweden and Denmark), in Estonia, and Czech Republic and an increasing religiosity in Malta, Romania, Poland, Ireland, and Italy. Therefore, religiosity is still high in Catholic countries, as well as in Romania, which being an Orthodox country is an exception.

The bivariate analyses indicate a strong correlation between nationalism and religiosity (Table 3). Moreover, the association between nationalism and religious value is the strongest as compared to the connection between the outcome variable and the other independent variables. All the other variables, both individual and contextual ones, have the predicted effect on the dependent variable, the older, less educated, and

poorer people being more religious. At the contextual level, the data supports the assertion that religious concentration is associated with higher levels of religiosity in European countries. The same

**Table 3** Bivariate correlations (Pearson) between religiosity and independent variables

	Religiosity
Country level variables	
Religious concentration	0.613
Per cent of Catholics in population	0.326
Human Development Index	-0.201
Individual level variables	
Nationalism	0.214***
Age	0.183***
Education	-0.121***
Income	-0.096***

\*\*\* $P \leq 0.01$ .

relation is valid for the percent of Catholics in a population, whereas the level of social development operates in the opposite direction. However, the relations change when simultaneously controlling for the effect of all the predictors on the outcome variable.

I have run a set of multilevel regression models to test the research's hypotheses. The first model (not shown) does not include explanatory variables, but indicates the amount of variance allotted to the individual level and to the contextual one. The variance

among countries ( $r^2 = 0.188$ ) is lower than the variance among the individuals within countries ( $\sigma^2 = 0.669$ ). However, the Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC = 0.22) indicates that ~ 22% of the variation of religiosity is among countries. Moreover, the  $\chi^2$  test for between countries variance component is highly significant ( $\chi^2 = 10090.42$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), indicating a high variance among the countries. Consequently, I can use multilevel models to explain the variation of religiosity by both individual and contextual variables.

**Table 4** Unstandardized multi-level regression coefficients. Dependent variable: religiosity

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Number of cases individual level	30870	29084	29084	29084
Number of cases country level	30	30	30	30
Country level variables				
Intercept	-0.106	0.047	4.513***	4.071***
Religious concentration			0.666***	1.149***
Post-communist country (dummy)			-0.363***	-0.341***
Per cent of Catholics			0.000	0.000
Human Development Index			-5.363***	-5.183***
Individual level variables				
Nationalism		0.094***	0.094***	-0.060
Religious concentration * Nationalism				0.291***
Post-communist country (dummy) * Nationalism				0.002
Age	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***
Education	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003
Income	-0.011***	-0.010***	-0.010***	-0.009***
Religious socialization in childhood	0.430***	0.424***	0.425***	0.427***
Employment (dummy)	-0.079***	-0.079***	-0.079***	-0.079***
Female (dummy)	0.231***	0.228***	0.228***	0.228***
Post-materialism (dummy)	-0.054**	-0.034*	-0.034*	-0.032*
Protestant denomination (dummy)	0.430***	0.427***	0.429***	0.432***
Catholic denomination (dummy)	0.710***	0.710***	0.711***	0.712***
$R^2_1$	0.334	0.347	0.399	0.403
$R^2_2$	0.592	0.577	0.810	0.822
Deviance	66066	61432	61419	61343

\* $P \leq 0.10$ ; \*\* $P \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $P \leq 0.01$ .  $R^2_1$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting an individual outcome;  $R^2_2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting a group mean [see Snijders and Bosker, 2002 (1999)].

The first model (Table 4) tests the effect of individual level variables on one's religiosity considered to determine the individual level of religiosity. Similar to literature, all the predictors were found to be highly significant, except for education that showed no significant impact. Age, religious socialization during childhood, being female, and belonging to Catholic or Protestant denomination have a posi-

tive effect on religiosity, whereas high income, being employed, and the post-materialist value orientation have a negative impact on religiosity. This model explains 0.334 variance at the individual level and 0.592 at the contextual level. The individual predictors account for the country-level variance, indicating that the social composition of the population included in the study significantly differs with respect to individual-level explanatory variables.

The second model contains individual predictors too, but this time nationalism was included as an independent variable. Nationalism was found to increase individual religiosity. This finding validates the first hypothesis. The relation between the dependent variable and other predictors does not change, the set of significant individual independent variables remain the same. The amount of variance explained at the individual level has only slightly increased. However, the deviance, which indicates how well the model fits the data, has significantly decreased (the difference being 4634) in model 2. According to Hox (2002), the models with lower level of deviance better fits the data as compared to models with higher deviance. This indicates a better fit for the model that includes nationalism among the predictors.

The third model explains how contextual-level variables relate to religiosity, keeping the effect of individual predictors constant. All the country-level variables are highly significant for the variation of religiosity, excepting the percent of Catholic population. Religious concentration increases the level of religiosity, whereas being a post-communist country and the level of socioeconomic development have the opposite outcome (Table 4). The data support the secularization theory and reject the supply-side approach. It seems that in Europe, a reduced number of religious participation. All the effects of the individual-level independent variables remain the same when controlling for the contextual predictors. Note that the explained variance on the contextual level increases significantly for the third whereas the variance explained on the individual level has marginally risen.

The last model tests the effect of nationalism on religiosity in different contexts. The effects of contextual predictors on the outcome variable remain unchanged, whereas the relation between nationalism and religiosity changes at the individual level. Therefore, nationalism per se has no significant effect on religiosity. However, the results indicate a strong and significant effect of nationalism on religiosity in the context of higher religious concentration, validating the third hypothesis. The nationalist ideology determines the level of religiosity only in societies characterized by a higher religious concentration. The data does not support the second hypothesis, nationalism not being a significant predictor for religiosity in post-communist countries.

## Conclusions

This article investigates the relationship between nationalism and religious beliefs, on Christian population of 30 European countries, controlling for the contextual factors such as religious concentration and being a post-communist country. Several significant conclusions arise from the analysis.

The results partially confirm the hypotheses. The impact of nationalism on religious values was demonstrated in countries where there is high religious concentration. Nationalist ideology affects religious beliefs only where there exists a dominant religion. This finding contradicts the economic market model, indicating that in European societies, religious concentration results in people being religious. A higher religious concentration means a reduced number of groups competing in the religious market and a strong state control. As the state is likely to protect those religious groups that

support the alliance between religion and national identity, the effect of nationalism is stronger in these states than in pluralist societies.

The results indicate a lower level of religiosity in post-communist countries, proving the efficiency of 'forced secularization' imposed by the communist regimes. One should note that the effect of these policies remains stronger after a decade of religious revival reported in the region (Inglehart and Norris 2004; Pollack 2004; Froese 2005). However, the results of the present analysis refer only to the traditional Christian religiosity, whereas in post-Soviet societies the religious revival mainly occurred rather in relation with religious syncretism than with traditional religion. The effect of religious pluralism on non-traditional religious orientations is an interesting direction for future studies. Moreover, additional attention may be given to the relation between nationalism and non-traditional religious beliefs. The data does not support the predicted effect of nationalism on religiosity in post-communist countries. It seems that the nationalist revival post-Cold War in Central and Eastern Europe was not the result of a particular alliance between national ideals and religions.

What do we learn from the paper? The results indicate that the coalition between the nationalist ideology and the religion mainly occurred because stronger ethnic groups competed over the resources and found in religion a strong ally helping them to define their boundaries, for example, in countries such as those from ex-Yugoslavia. The congruence between ethnic frontier and the religious one increases the involvement of nationalist adherents to religion. Thanks to the fact that many members of the same ethnic group share the same religious orientation and because of the higher level of religious concentration, religion becomes a useful tool for the nationalist ideology. The same is valid for Northern Ireland, as Mitchell pointed out (2006). The

Croatian experience indicates that religiosity decreases when its relevance for the nationalist movement diminishes (Sekulic, Massey and Hodson, 2006).

The results of the present investigation are limited to the Christian population of the countries under investigation and by the cross-sectional data used to test the hypotheses. Therefore, they cannot be generalized in other religious contexts. The causal relationship between religiosity and nationalist ideology cannot be adequately tested because of the cross-sectional data. Longitudinal studies may be undertaken to examine how the relationships between nationalist ideology and religiosity are shaped by larger social context. Future investigations may consider the Muslim population from European countries, as well as repeated survey data. Consequently, they would allow to gain deeper insights on the relationship between religion and nationalism and to extend the results for other religious groups.

## Notes

1. See [www.religionandstate.org](http://www.religionandstate.org).
2. For more information about EVS see EVS's homepage: [www.europeanvalues.nl](http://www.europeanvalues.nl) and Halman (2001).
3. European and World Values Surveys four-wave integrated data file, 1981-2004, v.20060423, 2006. The European Values Study Foundation and World Values Survey Association. Aggregate File Producers: ASEP/JDS, Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherlands. Aggregate File Distributors: ASEP/JDS and ZA, Cologne, Germany.

4. The reduced number of cases in the second level of analysis does not allow controlling for other country level predictors.

## Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express her thanks to two anonymous ESR reviewers, as well as to Bogdan Voicu and Claudiu Tufiş, for their useful comments.

## Funding

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62259, Project 'Applied social, human and political sciences. Post-doctoral training and post-doctoral fellowships in social, human and political sciences' co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

## References

- Argue, A., Johnson, D. and White, L. (1999). Age and religiosity; evidence from three wave panel analysis. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 38, 423-435.
- Barth, F. (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Becker, P. E. and Hofmeister, H. (2001). Work, family and religious involvement for men and women. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 40, 707-722.
- Blalock, H. (1967). *Toward a Theory of Minority-Group Relations*. New York: Wiley and Sons.
- Bruce, S. (1996). *Religion in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruce, S. (1999). Modernization, religious diversity and rational choice in Eastern Europe. *Religion, State and Society*, 27, 265-276.
- Bruce, S. (2001). The supply-side model of religion: the Nordic and Baltic states. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 40, 32-47.
- Calhoun, C. (1997). *Nationalism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Chaves, M. and Gorski, P. (2001). Religious pluralism and religious participation. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 261-281.
- de Vaus, D. and MacAllister, I. (1987). Gender differences in religion: a test of structural location theory. *American Sociological Review*, 52, 472-481.
- Finke, R. (1990). Religious de-regulation: origins and consequences. *Journal of Church and State*, 32, 609-626.
- Finke, R. and Stark, R. (1988). Evaluating the evidences: religious economies and sacred canopies. *American Sociological Review*, 54, 1054-1065.

- Fox, J. (2004). The rise of religious nationalism and conflict: ethnic conflict and revolutionary wars, 1945-2001. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41, 715-731.
- Fox, J. (2008). *A World Survey of Religion and State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Franklin Lytle, P. (1998). Religion and politics in Eastern Europe. In Remet, S. (Ed.), *Eastern Europe: Politics, Culture and Society Since 1989*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp. 304-329.
- Froese, P. (2004). After atheism: an analysis of religious monopolies in the post-communist world. *Sociology of Religion*, 65, 57-75.
- Froese, P. (2005). Secular Czechs and devoted Slovaks: explaining religious differences. *Review of Religious Research*, 46, 269-283.
- Gautie, M. (1997). Church attendance and religious belief in post-communist societies. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 36, 289-296.
- Halman, L. (2001). *The European Values Study: The Third Wave*. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Halman, L. and Draulans, V. (2004). Religious beliefs and practices in contemporary Europe. In Arts, W. and Halman, L. (Eds.), *European Values at the Turn of the Millennium*. Boston, Leiden: Brill, pp. 283-316.
- Hamberg, E. and Petterson, T. (1994). The religious market: denominational competition and religious participation in contemporary Sweden. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 33, 205-216.
- Hoppenbrouwers, F. (2002). Winds of change: religious nationalism in a transformation context. *Religion, State & Society*, 30, 305-316.
- Hout, M. and Greeley, A. (1987). The center doesn't hold: church attendance in the United States, 1940- 1984. *American Sociological Review*, 52, 325-345.
- Hox, J. (2002). *Multilevel Analysis: Techniques and applications*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Iannaccone, L. (1990). Religious practices: a human capital approach. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 29, 297-314.
- Iannaccone, L. (1991). The consequences of religious market structure. *Rationality and Society*, 3, 156-177.
- Iannaccone, L. and Everton, S. (2004). Never on sunny days: lessons from weekly attendance counts. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 43, 191-207.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Post- Modernization. Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2004). *Sacred and Secular*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, D. C. (1997). Formal education vs. religious belief: soliciting new evidence with multinomial logit modeling. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 36, 231-246.

- Juergensmeyer, M. (1993). *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kinnvall, C. (2004). Globalization and religious nation-alism: self, identity, and search for ontological security. *Political Psychology*, 25, 741-767.
- Krunovich, R. (2006). An exploration of the salience of Christianity for national identity in Europe. *Sociological Perspective*, 49, 435-460.
- Kurth, J. (2007). Religion and national identity in America and Europe. *Society*, 44, 120-125.
- Leujtean, L. (2007). 'For the Glory of Romanians': orthodoxy and nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1845. *Nationalities Papers*, 35, 717-742.
- Martin, D. (2005). *On Secularization. Towards a Revised Theory*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Merdjanova, I. (2000). In search of identity: nationalism and religion in Eastern Europe. *Religion, State & Society*, 28, 233-262.
- Mihailescu, V. (2007). *Anthropology. Five Introductions [Antropologie. Cinci introduceri]*. Iași: Polirom.
- Mitchell, C. (2006). The religious content of ethnic identities. *Sociology*, 40, 1135-1152.
- Nelsen, H. (1981). Religious conformity in an age of disbelief: contextual effects of time, denomination and family processes upon church decline and apostasy. *American Sociological Review*, 46, 632-640.
- Pettersson, T. (2006). Religion in contemporary society: eroded by human well-being, supported by cultural diversity. *Comparative Sociology*, 5, 231-257.
- Pollack, D. (2001). Modification in the religious field of central and Eastern Europe. *European Societies*, 3, 135-165.
- Pollack, D. (2003). Religiousness inside and outside the church in selected post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. *Social Compass*, 50, 321-334.
- Pollack, D. (2008). Religious change in Europe: theoretical considerations and empirical findings. *Social Compass*, 55, 168-186.
- Rieffer, B.-A. (2003). Religion and nationalism: understanding the consequences of a complex relationship. *Ethnicities*, 3, 215-242.
- Safran, W. (2008). Language, ethnicity and religion: a complex and persistent linkage. *Nation and Nationalism*, 14, 171-190.
- Sekulic, D., Massey, G. and Hodson, R. (2006). Ethnic intolerance and ethnic conflict in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29, 797-827.
- Smith, A. (1991). *National Identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Smith, A. (1992). Chosen people: why the Ethnic groups survive. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15, 440-449.

Smith, A. (2000). The 'Sacred' Dimension of Nationalism. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 29, 791-814.

Snijders, T. and Bosker, R. (2002). *Multilevel Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multi-level Modeling*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Stark, R. and Iannaccone, L. (1994). A Supply-side Reinterpretation of 'Secularization' in Europe. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 33, 230-252.

Straughn, J. B. and Feld, S. (2010). America as a Christian Nation? Understanding Religious

Boundaries of National Identity in the United States. *Sociology of Religion*, 71, 280-306.

Volkan, V. (1999). Individual and large-group identity: parallels in development and characteristics in stability and crisis. *Croatian Medical Journal*, 40, 458-465.

Yuchtman-Yaar, E. and Alkalay, Y. (2007). Religious zones, economic development and modern value orientation: individual versus contextual effects. *Social Science Research*, 36, 789-807.

## Appendix A

**Table A1** Indexes of fit of the factorial model in Figure 1

Country	RMSEA	CFI
Austria	0.063	0.996
Belgium	0.057	0.997
Bulgaria	0.070	0.995
Czech Republic	0.054	0.997
Croatia	0.146	0.983
Denmark	0.095	0.992
Estonia	0.142	0.980
France	0.063	0.996
Eastern Germany	0.121	0.987
Western Germany	0.111	0.990
Greece	0.122	0.986
Ireland	0.184	0.974
Iceland	0.160	0.978
Italy	0.120	0.998
Latvia	0.089	0.993
Lithuania	0.145	0.982
Luxemburg	0.097	0.991
Malta	0.145	0.924
Great Britain	0.082	0.993
Netherlands	0.083	0.994
Poland	0.180	0.977
Portugal	0.181	0.974
Romania	0.122	0.960
Russia	0.086	0.993
Slovakia	0.092	0.994
Slovenia	0.056	0.997
Spain	0.081	0.994
Sweden	0.134	0.981
Ukraine	0.079	0.994
Hungary	0.075	0.995